

OECD GENDER INITIATIVE



Gender Equality



Education - Employment - Entrepreneurship

Across the world, there is a strong case for greater gender equality in the economy. Greater economic opportunities for women can contribute to stronger, better and fairer growth by raising the overall level of human capital and labour productivity and by mobilising hitherto under-utilized labour supply. Helping more people to realise their work and family aspirations, more men and women will share the benefits of growth. However, achieving greater gender equality remains a big challenge despite the many gains in women's educational and employment outcomes in recent history.

leadership are key components of the OECD's wider agenda to develop policies for stronger, better and fairer growth.

This report is an adaptation of a report presented to the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting in May 2011; it focuses on OECD countries in the Pacific Rim and, where possible, brings in cross-nationally comparable data for other APEC countries. Chapters 1 (Education) and 2 (Employment) build on existing OECD work in these two areas. Chapter 3 summarizes some key findings on

imbalance in the household division of paid and unpaid work. Women are less likely to work for pay, they are more likely to have lower hourly earnings, and are less likely to reach decision-making positions in either public or private sectors. Women are also a minority amongst entrepreneurs worldwide and women-owned firms systematically differ from those owned by men in terms of size, sector, capitalisation and performance. As a result, women are more likely to experience poverty and deprivation than men, even though the recent economic crisis has illustrated how female employment can increase families' resilience in face of economic adversity.

“Greater economic opportunities for women can contribute to stronger, better and fairer growth....”

In 2011 the OECD launched its Gender Initiative to help governments promote gender equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship (the “three Es”). Reducing persistent gender inequalities is necessary not only for reasons of fairness and equity but also out of economic necessity. Greater economic opportunities for women will help to increase labour productivity, and higher female employment will widen the base of taxpayers and contributors to social protection systems which will come under increasing pressure due to population ageing. More gender diversity would help promote innovation and competitiveness in business. Greater economic empowerment of women and greater gender equality in

Entrepreneurship that can be gleaned from OECD analyses and presents a framework for gender-sensitive cross-national data collection in this area.

Gender parity in educational attainment has been achieved by most OECD countries, but further action is needed in many developing countries to improve enrolment and retention of girls in post-primary education. Furthermore, women remain severely under-represented in key, growth-enhancing fields of education such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Labour markets exhibit many “gender gaps”. Limits to public support for caring contribute to a persistent

The existing knowledge base facilitates drawing some generalised policy lessons towards advancing gender equality. These policies may well remain “aspirational” for the near future in view of capacity constraints in many economies and limits to public budgets, in particular for developing countries. However, this should not deter countries from taking intermediate steps towards greater gender equality in their economies, as so many have committed themselves to, for example, through the Millennium Development Goals. Across the OECD as well as the APEC economies, achieving greater gender equality does not involve a “quick fix”, but will require continuous policy attention across a range of issues.



OECD Gender Initiative: The Way Ahead

Building on the expertise and data of the OECD and other international institutions, the OECD's Gender Initiative will identify, bring together and update a set of indicators on the key dimensions of gender inequality in education, employment and entrepreneurship (the "three Es"). The project will also: examine why barriers to gender equality persist; illustrate the importance of gender equality for a stronger and fairer economy; establish standard indicators to measure progress; and develop a database framework and comparable data on entrepreneurship. As part of the Gender Initiative, a one-stop data portal for indicators on gender equality in the "three Es" will be launched by the end of 2012.

Benchmarking against standard indicators of gender equality in the "three Es"

Based on these indicators, the OECD will benchmark OECD and selected non-OECD countries on the various dimensions of gender inequality in the "three Es". The goal is not to rank countries but rather to provide policy makers with a snapshot of where countries are at, allow policy makers to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of their policies.

Develop additional knowledge on persisting barriers to gender equality in the "three Es"

Further and up-to-date evidence needs to be collected on the persistent barriers to gender equality in economic outcomes, on the linkages between inequalities in the "three Es" and on the effect of gender differences in human capital accumulation and labour force participation on economic growth. Data on gender equality focused aid will also be analysed to identify specific areas where donor investments could be increased to achieve gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship.

Education: the Initiative will examine the severe under-representation of women in growth-enhancing fields such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the effects of such choices on their transition to the labour market and the subsequent career development. In support of attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, the project will also look at the mix of policies that can facilitate girls' completion of a quality post-primary education in developing countries by identifying existing good practices that could be replicated.

Employment: the Initiative will further analyse gender gaps and barriers that persist in parental leave and labour market outcomes, the drivers of female labour supply and causes and consequences of the horizontal and vertical segmentation of employment by gender, both in OECD and non-OECD countries. The analysis of determinants and consequences for selecting into specific types of informal employment – lower tier or upper tier – will be analysed. The Gender Initiative will also investigate how the sharing of household and family responsibilities between women and men changes with the increasing participation of women in the labour market using time-use surveys, also

for some selected developing countries, and will identify good practice programmes. For some developing countries the Gender Initiative will also consider the effects of recent structural changes in global labour markets and trade patterns on women's employment outcomes.

Entrepreneurship: the Initiative will explore gender differences in sectoral concentration, issues relevant to gender gaps in financial knowledge and literacy levels, and the utilisation of financial instruments. The Initiative will investigate drivers and obstacles to innovation for women's enterprises and consider measures to foster a greater level of innovation among female entrepreneurs both in OECD countries and other regions.

Develop policy recommendations to reduce the persistent barriers to gender equality in the "three Es"

The OECD's Gender Initiative will expand the review of policies and good practices adopted by OECD countries and selected non-member countries to close the gender gap in "the three Es". For developing countries, the review of policies in education will focus on the mix of policies that can facilitate girls' completion of a quality post-primary education. Drawing upon this review and the above analysis, the Initiative will provide evidence-based policy recommendations and will examine how successful policies might be adapted and transferred between OECD countries, emerging and developing economies. Further reports on these issues will be released in 2012.



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